DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 178 817 CG 013 928

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TITLE General Manpower Forecasts: Some Indications for the Employment Outlook in Student Services.
PUB DATE 8 Apr 79
NOTE 14p.; Some charts are of marginal legibility; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (61st, Washington, D.C., April 8-11, 1979)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Employment Opportunities; *Employment Projections; *Futures (of Society); Higher Education; *Labor Market; *Occupational Mobility; *Population Trends; Student Personnel Services; *Student Personnel Workers; Trend Analysis

ABSTRACT

Manpower forecasts, available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Census Bureau, and the National Center for Education Statistics, indicate that from 1970 to 1990 there will be significant major shifts in the number of Americans in the prime-age group of 25-44 years of age. This huge prime-age labor force suggests that there will be fierce competition for promotions coupled with career disappointments for many, and that competition for movement up the organizational ladder will be further-sharpened by secondary effects of anti-dsicrimination laws. Implications of these projections for the student services labor market reveal that: (1) declines in the number of 18-21 year olds will affect the labor market conditions negatively or, at best, cause a "no growth" situation; (2) laid-off or retrenched personnel will re-enter the labor market and further intensify an already-competitive situation; and (3) job mobility will continue to decline over the next decade. (Author/HLM)

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General Manpower Forecasts: Some Indications for the Employment Outlook in Student Services

by

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Presented at the 61st Annual Conference of the
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
April 8, 1979 Washington, D.C.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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I believe it is appropriate to immediately indicate that manpower forecasting, especially in a free choice, decentralized society, is indeed a hazardout business. Labor market conditions are affected by numerous stimuli, some of which just cannot be predicted. However, long term general trends within manpower forecasts have some distinct implications for all fields and can be extremely useful in both institutional and individual planning. Consequently, the purpose of my comments this afternoon will be to review some of the general manpower forecasts presently available and their implications for the employment outlook for student services. I will also identify and discuss certain selected factors which will have an impact in the student services labor market.

Manpower forecasts are readily available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor, the United States Department of Commerce, and the Bureau of the Census. The National Center for Education Statistics prepares forecasts specifically related to education. The types and subjects of these forecasts are numerous, and there is at least one applicable to any given situation.

This afternoon, I would like to focus on two projections which I believe have significant implications for the student services labor market. The first is the Bureau of the Census projections regarding changes in the prime age labor force, and the second is the labor force projections released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics regarding labor force growth from 1977 to 1990.

In their projections of the labor force from 1970 to 1990, the Bureau of the Census indicates that there will be significant major shifts in the number of Americans in the prime age group, that is the 25 to 44 year-olds.

(S H O W V I S U A L)

Whereas in 1975, 40 million workers were in this cohort, by 1980 there will be 46.9 millions, by 1985 there will be 55 millions and by 1990 there will be 60.7 millions. Basically, the huge population bulge produced by the post World War II baby boom has now passed through our colleges, and the entry level positions and are now beginning to seek middle management positions or promotions. Professor Richard B. Freeman of Harvard University points out that this huge prime age labor force "suggests fierce competition for promotions coupled with career disappointment for many" (Flint, 1978, p. 34). Arnold Weber, Professor of Economics and Provost at Carnegie Mellon University, pointed out that "Competition to move up the organizational ladder will be sharpened further by the secondary effects of antidiscrimination laws... Whereas in 1975 there may have been 10 workers competing for a middle management position there will now be 13 and to this total you can probably add three women and three members of minority groups." Peter Henle, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor, further illuminates the problem by indicating that the managers now in their 40's and 50's are spread pretty thin. However, there is lots of talent in their 30's or turning 30. The real problem will be at the tail end of the baby boom.

Those people born in the mid 1950's will find that the middle management jobs have been taken by their older brothers and sisters. Furthermore, Jerome M. Roscow, President of the Work in America Institute predicts that a new incentive system will have to be created with success tied to lateral moves not just going up the ladder, since there won't be enough room on the ladder.

Consequently, experts such as the three gentlemen just mentioned suggest nine problems which will result from this change in the 25 to 44 cohort

1. An excessive number of 25 to 44 year olds
2. A shortfall of younger workers due to the lower birth rate of the last decade
3. A squeezing of wage differentials between the young and relatively inexperienced and the older experienced worker
4. Increasing backlash against affirmative action programs
5. Mid career workers will try to push out older workers
6. Possible unionization
7. Undermining of the hierarchal system of management
8. Development of new incentive system
9. Frustrated workers

In general, I believe the implications of the Bureau of the Census projections for the student services labor market are three fold:

1. A good market at the entry level as candidates and positions should be near balance

2. An excess of second and third level candidates and a general buyers market at the middle management level
3. Greater lateral movement to improve a candidates experience and skills and market position

The second set of projections I would like to review were released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in August of 1978. These projections indicated that the most dramatic change in the labor force will be a very sharp decline in the number of youths. Relevant to the labor market for student services is a projected drop of 2 to 4 % of the 20 to 24 year old cohort. The second dramatic change is a substantial increase in the labor force participation rate for women. They project an increase of from 5% to 12% depending on market conditions. Their projections also highlighted a significant increase in the proportion of persons in the 25 to 54 age group. Quite simply the implications of these projections seem to be also threefold.

1. A possible increasing shortage of entry level candidates
2. An increase in the number of female candidates at all levels
3. An excess of candidates in the 25 to 44 cohort

The two labor force projections just discussed are general projections but I suggest that they have significant implications for the student services labor market which cannot and should not be ignored. I would be remiss however, if I did not take a few minutes to identify some of the other known factors which will affect the student services labor market. I'm sure most of you are well aware of these factors, but a quick review might be beneficial.

Obviously, the market conditions will be affected by enrollment.

Depending on whose estimate you use, such as those by Cartter, Freeman or Dresch, an enrollment decline is in the making which will probably have a negative effect on the labor market (Ochsner and Solomon, 1979) in the next two years. Moreover, the actual number of 18 to 21 year olds will drop 15.3% during the next decade (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1977) and the number of 18 year olds will decline by 20% as early as 1985 (Wetherby, 1977). Hence a loss of 2.6 million potential students or a decrease of 9.6% by 1985. (U.S. Census Bureau, 1977) This decrease in the 18 year old population will of course vary from state to state, but by 1985 11 states will lose over 20% of their 18 year old population, 19 states will lost 11 to 20% and 9 will lose 1 to 10%. (Henderson, 1977) Pennsylvania, for example, by 1988 will experience from 1975 levels, a decline of 22% in high school graduates and a decline of 12% in the 18 to 21 year old cohort (Board of Trustees, 1978). The State University of New York had 5,000 fewer students this past semester which resulted in a loss of revenue of $2 million (The New York Times, 1978). The City University of New York experienced a decrease of 3,000 full time equivalent students during the same period and had to layoff 125 non-tenured professional staff members (Fiske, 1978).

The implications of the decline in the 18 to 21 year old cohort are not exactly clear nor universally agreed upon. However, I believe a few generalizations are justified.

1. This factor will affect the market conditions in a negative manner and at best cause a "no growth" situation

2. Laid off or retrenched personnel will re-enter the labor market and further intensify an already competitive situation, particularly at middle management levels
3. There will be a decrease in job mobility for at least the next decade with the last five years being worse than the first five

Obviously, there are many other factors which could affect the labor market conditions and the general employment outlook in student services. Moreover, it is appropriate to note that not all specialities within student services will be affected in the same way. The Occupational Outlook for College Graduates, 1978-79 Edition, forecasts an increase in employment opportunities for Career Planning and Placement Counselors (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1978). However, their overall forecast for college student personnel workers is "somewhat competitive through 1985." Hopefully, our presentations here today have helped to clarify what exactly is meant by that nebulous phrase "somewhat competitive."

Perhaps to rephrase an old saying it could be said that if I get a job and you don't, it is somewhat competitive. If you get a job and I don't, it is competitive. If we both don't get jobs, it is very competitive.

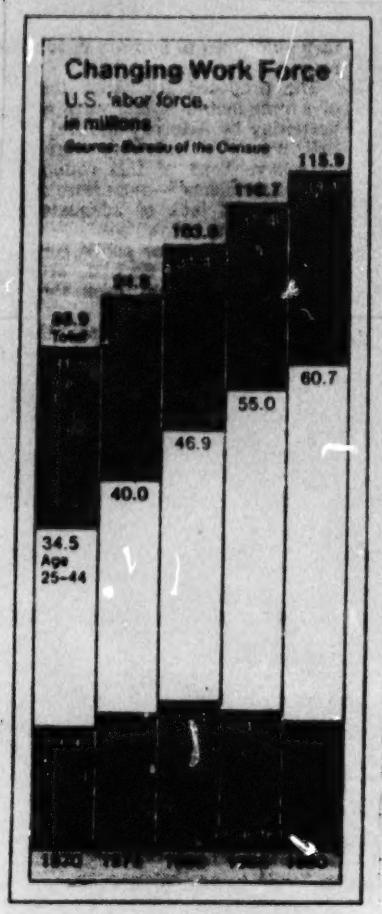
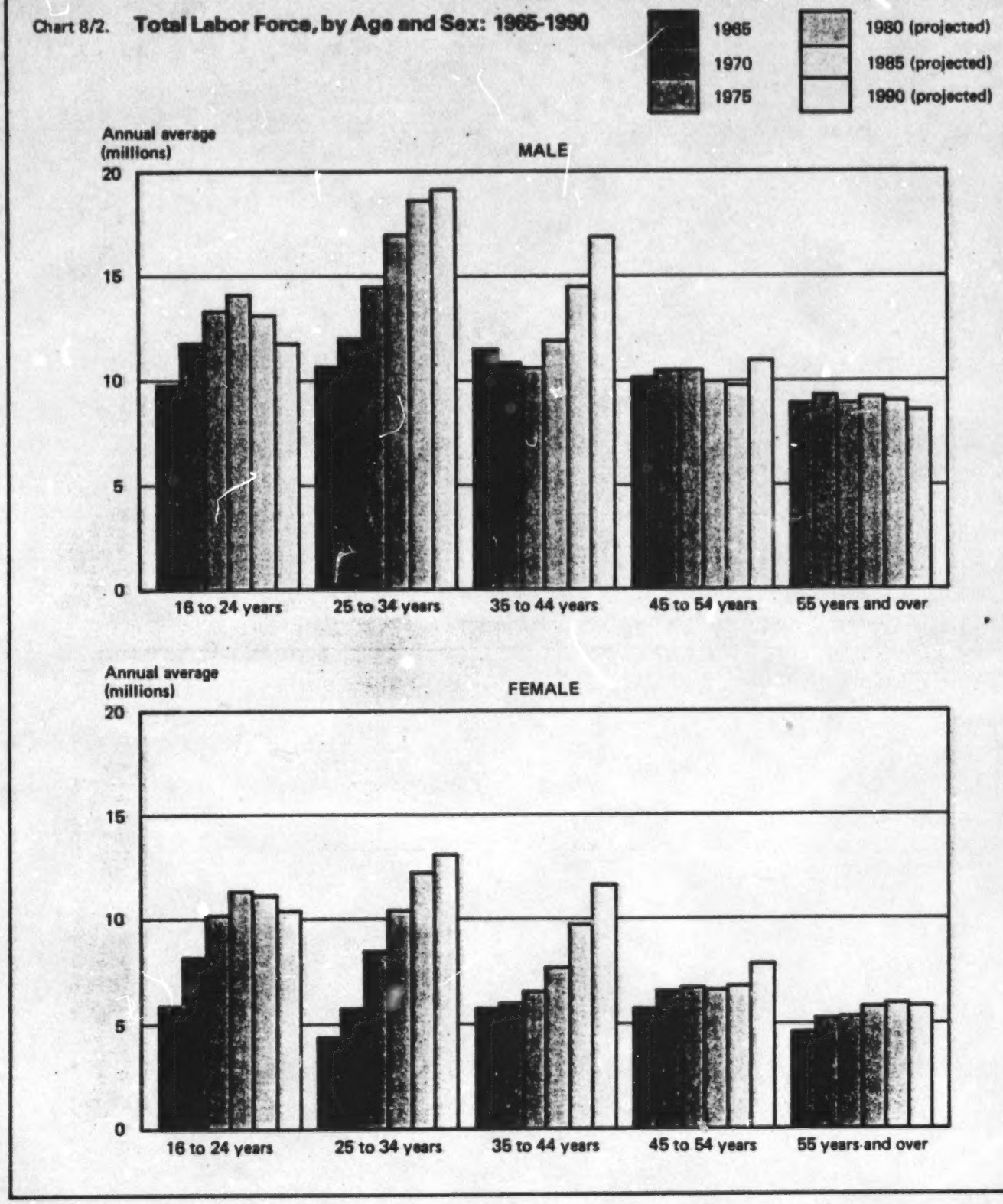
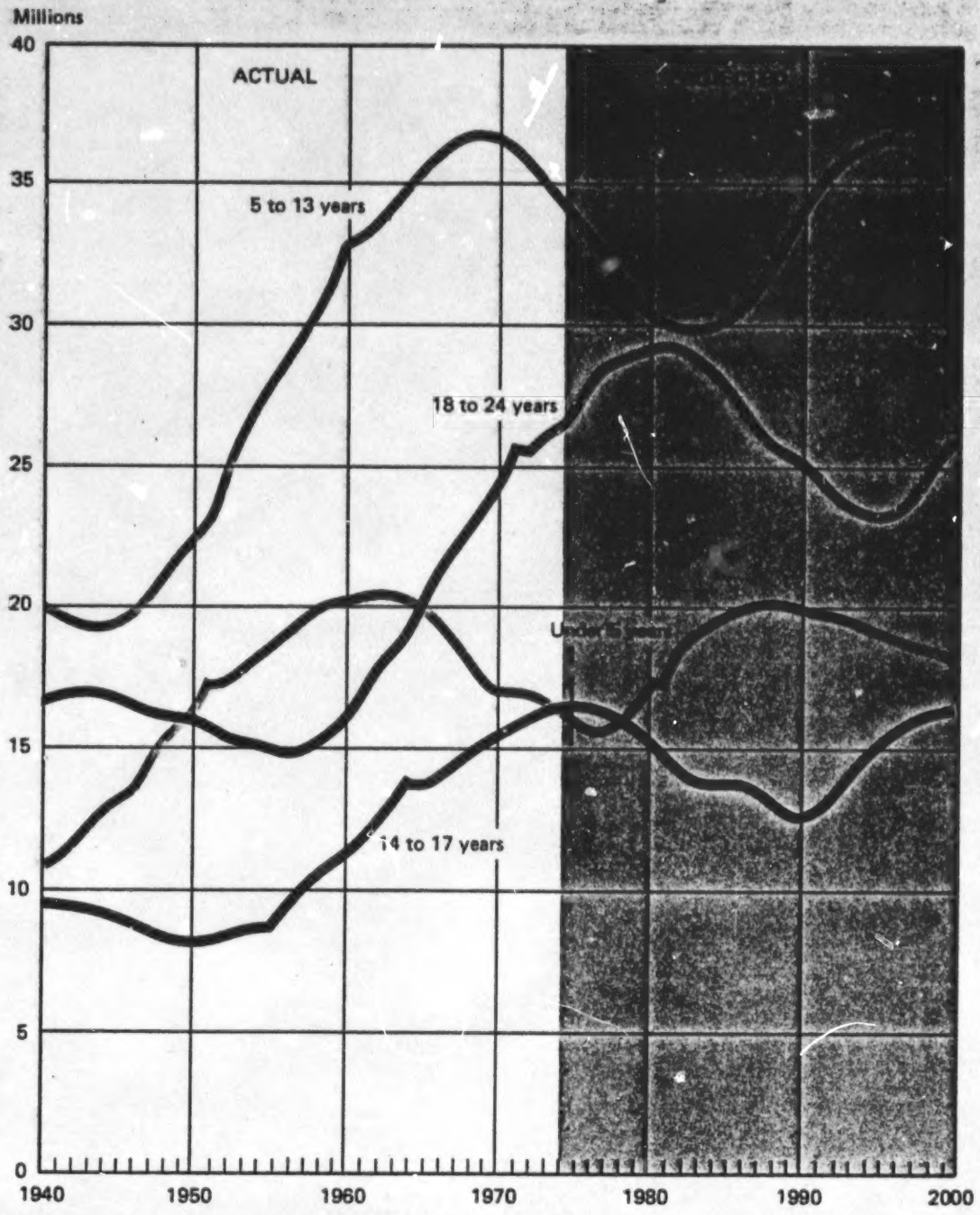

Changing Work Force
U.S. labor force,
in millions
Source: Bureau of the Census
115.9
110.7
103.8
60.7
55.0
46.9
40.0
34.5
Age
25–44

Chart 8/2. **Total Labor Force, by Age and Sex: 1965-1990**



See technical notes and table 8/2.

Chart 7/1. **Population Under 25 Years of Age, by Selected Age Groups: 1940-2000**

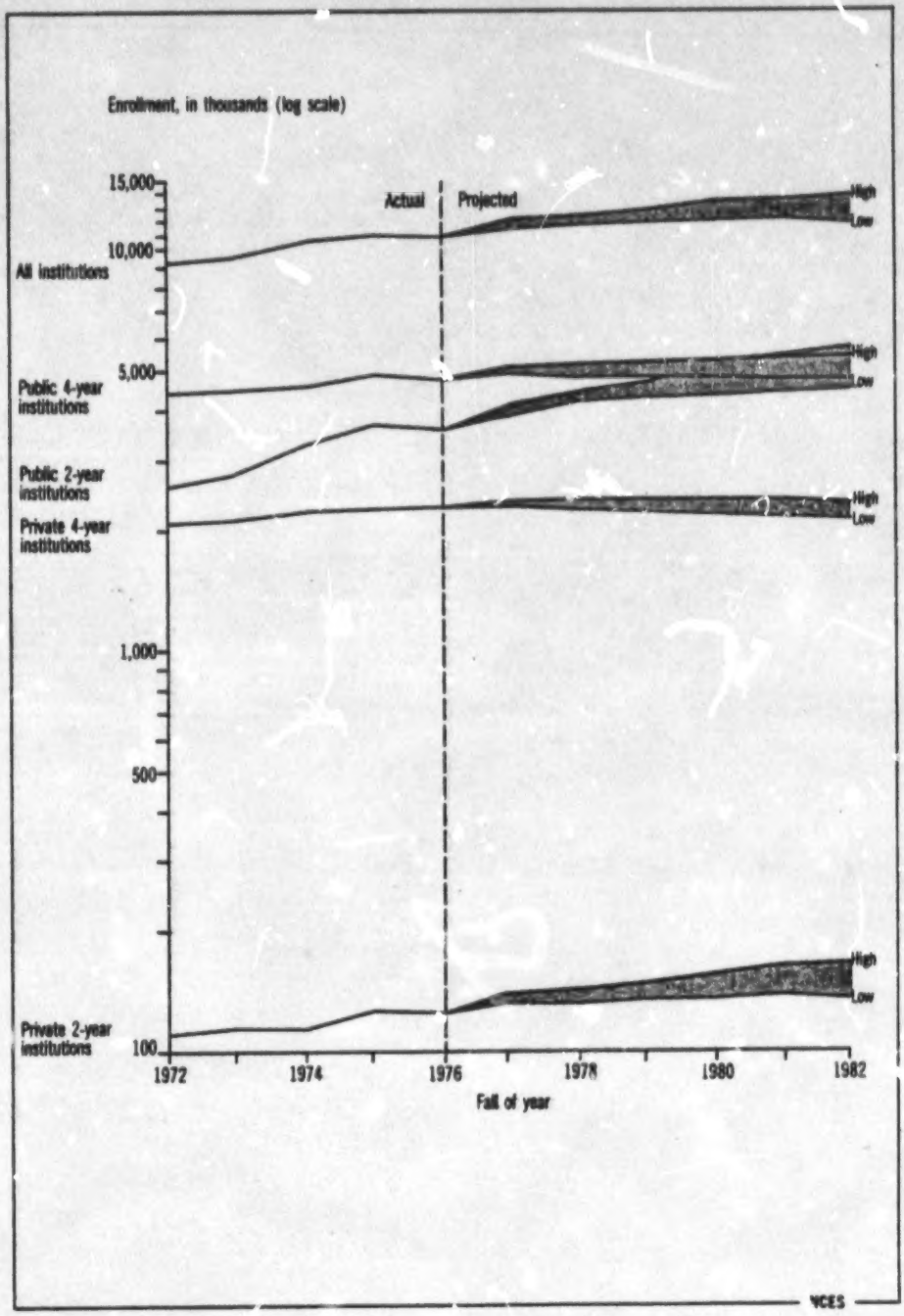


See technical notes and table 7/1.

Chart 3.4
Enrollment in Institutions of Higher Education

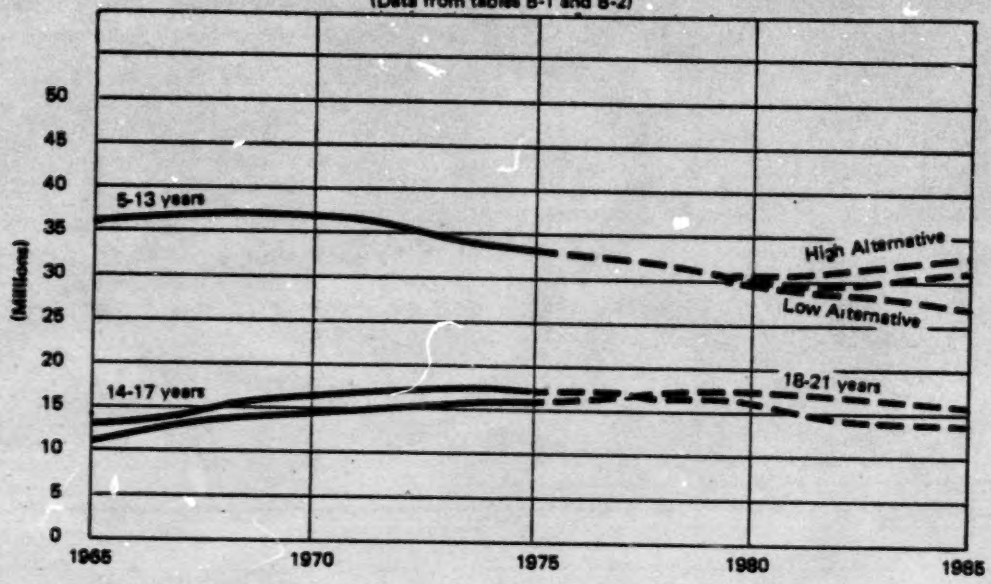
Source: The Condition of Education, 1978 Edition, Statistical Report
Edited by Mary A. Golladay and Jay Noell,
National Center for Education Statistics p. 115.

Projected enrollment growth in higher education is greatest for public 2-year institutions.



Source: Projections of Education Statistics to 1985-86, by Martin M. Frankel and Forrest W. Harrison, National Center for Education Statistics. 1977. p. 12

Figure 9.–School- and college-age population, with alternatives: United States, October 1965 to 1985
(Data from tables 8-1 and 8-2)



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Source: Projections of Education Statistics to 1985-86.
by Martin M. Frankel and Forrest W. Harrison,
National Center for Education Statistics. 1977. p. 12

Figure 1.--Enrollment in grades K-12 of regular day schools, with alternatives: United States, fall 1965 to 1985

(Data from tables 3, B-3, B-4)